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UNH Interim President J. Bonnie Newman Delivers State Of The University Address

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Editors: The full text of Interim President J. Bonnie Newman's address is available at <http://www.unh.edu/president/jbonnienewman/speeches/0906sou.htm>

DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire Interim President J. Bonnie Newman assessed the accomplishments of the last year and outlined future goals during the annual State of the University address Thursday, Sept. 7, 2006.

Newman began by honoring the 2006 Faculty Excellence Award winners and touched on the process of developing a more robust general education curriculum as part of UNH's Discovery Program, through which several "inquiry" courses have been added. Designed for first-year students, inquiry courses are small seminars that focus on experiential learning that encourage students to think independently, from developing ways to solve problems to presenting the results of their solutions to their peers in a research setting.

UNH's connection to the world, Newman said, is a result of faculty members known for the "primacy of their research" as well as their talent as educators. Added to that is the increase in partnerships with federal agencies, growth in intellectual property—up 25 percent—and the strength of sponsored grants and contracts receive by the university. Last year, total external awards increased 18 percent from the previous year.

Newman also noted the connection between the university and the state. UNH is a major resource for New Hampshire's workforce, Newman said. And students who partake of more than 100 major courses of study "go on to drive New Hampshire's economic and cultural vitality."

The president offered praise for UNH Cooperative Extension and its outreach programs that run throughout the state. She also lauded strides made in conservation, noting the fleet of UNH vehicles running on biodiesel and other alternative fuels.

On the issue of the university's relationship with the town of Durham, Newman stressed the need for all UNH community members to "assume personal responsibility" for their behavior and to be neighbors who "take care of one another."

While describing a mission to foster opportunity, excellence and access, Newman cited the financial challenges ahead, saying, "Affordability is a growing obstacle." Tuition for in-state students has risen to \$17,985 with room and board while non-residents pay \$30,435.

Calling those difficult numbers for most families, Newman underscored the need to address

costs in a manner that will provide “affordability and excellence,” adding that, in June, the Board of Trustees approved a 17.1 percent increase in financial aid.

Other systemwide increased expenses include energy costs, up about 18.9 percent annually; employee fringe benefits, which have risen 7.8 percent due to medical insurance fees; and repair and renovation costs, which increased by 8.5 percent.

Newman added she was hopeful contract negotiations with the UNH chapter of the American Association of University Professors would be completed soon, stating a commitment to a contract that “supports our excellent faculty consistent with the practices of our national peer institutions.”

Discussing UNH’s \$212 million endowment, Newman called the need for continued growth “essential to the university’s well being.”

Newman ended the address by sharing several stories of compassion, commitment and academic success at UNH: a student campaign to help victims of Hurricane Katrina through “Give a Dollar, Save a Life”; Thompson School students’ fundraiser held in memory of Crescentia True, a former UNH staff member; junior Aislinn Johnson’s 7,000-mile cross-country trek in the Canola Stroll, a van powered by recycled cooking oil; and graduate student Aaren Freeman, whose work on evolutionary response in blue mussels was published in the journal *Science*.

All, Newman said, were examples of how UNH “yields tremendous dividends—for our students, our state, and our world.”